CLAIMS

1. Controlled release and taste-masking oral pharmaceutical compositions containing an active ingredient, comprising:

a) a matrix consisting of $C_6$-$C_{20}$ alcohols or $C_8$-$C_{20}$ fatty acids or esters of fatty acids with glycerol or sorbitol or other polyalcohols with carbon atom chain not higher than six;

b) an amphiphilic matrix;

c) an outer hydrophilic matrix in which the lipophilic matrix and the optional amphiphilic matrix are dispersed;

d) optionally other excipients.

2. Controlled release compositions as claimed in claim 1 comprising a lipophilic or inert matrix consisting of lipophilic compounds with melting point below 90°C in which the active ingredient is at least partially inglobated and a hydrophilic matrix.

3. Compositions as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 2 in which the amphiphilic compounds are polar lipids of type I or II (lecithin, phosphatidylcholine, phosphatidyl-ethanolamine), ceramides, glycol alkyl ethers, esters of fatty acids with polyethylene glycols or diethylene glycols.

4. Compositions as claimed in claim 1, 2 or 3, in which the lipophilic matrix consists of compound selected from unsaturated or hydrogenated alcohols or fatty acids, salts, esters or amides thereof, mono-, di- or triglycerids of fatty acids, the polyethoxylated derivatives thereof, waxes, cholesterol derivatives.

5. Compositions as claimed in any one of the above claims, in which the hydrophilic matrix consists of

hydrogel-forming compounds.

6. Compositions as claimed in claim 5 in which the hydrophilic matrix consists of compounds selected from acrylic or methacrylic acid polymers or copolymers, alkylvinyl polymers, hydroxyalkylcellulose, carboxyalkylcellulose, polysaccharides, dextrins, pectins, starches and derivatives, alginic acid, natural or synthetic gums, polyalcohols.

7. Compositions as claimed in any one of the above claims, comprising a gastro-resistant coating.

8. Compositions as claimed in claim 7, in which the gastro-resistant coating consists of methacrylic acid polymers or cellulose derivatives.

9. Compositions as claimed in any one of the above claims, in which the active ingredient is wholly contained in the inert/amphiphilic matrix, in the form of tablets, capsules or minitablets.

10. Compositions as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9 in which the active ingredient is dispersed both in the hydrophilic matrix and in the lipophilic/amphiphilic matrix, in the form of tablets, capsules or minitablets.

11. Compositions as claimed in any one of the above claims, in which the active ingredient belongs to the therapeutical classes of analgesics, antitussives, bronchodilators, antipsychotics, selective β 2 antagonists, calcium antagonists, antiparkinson drugs, non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs, antihistamines, antidiarrheals and intestinal antiinflammatories, spasmolytics, anxiolytics, oral antidiabetics, cathartics, antiepileptics, topical antimicrobials.

12. Compositions as claimed in claim 10, in which the active ingredient is selected from mesalazine (5-aminosalicylic acid), budesonide, metformin, octylonium

bromide, gabapentin, carbidopa, nimesulide, propionylilcarnitine, isosorbide mono- and dinitrate, naproxen, ibuprofen, ketoprofen, diclofenac, thiaprophenic acid, nimesulide, chlorhexidine, benzydamine, tibezonium iodide, cetylpyridinium chloride, benzalkonium chloride, sodium fluoride.

13. Compositions as claimed in any one of the above claims, containing bioadhesive substances.

14. Pharmaceutical compositions as claimed in the above claims, in the form of tablets chewable or erodible in the buccal cavity or in the first portion of the gastrointestinal tract.